

Senate Bill No. 215

CHAPTER 69

An act to amend Section 1050 of the Penal Code, relating to criminal procedure.

[Approved by Governor July 14, 1997. Filed with
Secretary of State July 14, 1997.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 215, Alpert. Criminal procedure: continuance of proceeding.

Existing law specifies the procedures by which a motion to continue any hearing in a criminal proceeding, including the trial, may be made. Continuances may be granted only upon a showing of good cause, which includes, but is not limited to, cases involving allegations of sexual assault or child abuse where the prosecuting attorney assigned to the case has another criminal proceeding in progress in that or another court.

This bill would add cases involving allegations of domestic violence to those cases constituting good cause for a continuance.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1050 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

1050. (a) The welfare of the people of the State of California requires that all proceedings in criminal cases shall be set for trial and heard and determined at the earliest possible time. To this end the Legislature finds that the criminal courts are becoming increasingly congested with resulting adverse consequences to the welfare of the people and the defendant. Excessive continuances contribute substantially to this congestion and cause substantial hardship to victims and other witnesses. Continuances also lead to longer periods of presentence confinement for those defendants in custody and the concomitant overcrowding and increased expenses of local jails. It is therefore recognized that the people, the defendant, and the victims and other witnesses have the right to an expeditious disposition, and to that end it shall be the duty of all courts and judicial officers and of all counsel, both for the prosecution and the defense, to expedite these proceedings to the greatest degree that is consistent with the ends of justice. In accordance with this policy, criminal cases shall be given precedence over, and set for trial and heard without regard to the pendency of, any civil matters or proceedings.

(b) To continue any hearing in a criminal proceeding, including the trial, (1) a written notice shall be filed and served on all parties to the proceeding at least two court days before the hearing sought

to be continued, together with affidavits or declarations detailing specific facts showing that a continuance is necessary; and (2), within two court days of learning that he or she has a conflict in the scheduling of any court hearing, including a trial, an attorney shall notify the calendar clerk of each court involved, in writing, indicating which hearing was set first. A party shall not be deemed to have been served within the meaning of this section until that party actually has received a copy of the documents to be served, unless the party, after receiving actual notice of the request for continuance, waives the right to have the documents served in a timely manner. Regardless of the proponent of the motion, the prosecuting attorney shall notify people's witnesses and the defense attorney shall notify defense's witnesses of the notice of motion, the date of the hearing, and the witnesses' right to be heard by the court. The superior and municipal courts of a county may adopt rules, which shall be consistent, regarding the method of giving the notice or waiver of service required by this subdivision, where a continuance is sought because of a conflict between scheduled appearances in the courts of that county.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (b), a party may make a motion for a continuance without complying with the requirements of that subdivision. However, unless the moving party shows good cause for the failure to comply with those requirements, the court may impose sanctions as provided in Section 1050.5.

(d) When a party makes a motion for a continuance without complying with the requirements of subdivision (b), the court shall hold a hearing on whether there is good cause for the failure to comply with those requirements. At the conclusion of the hearing the court shall make a finding whether good cause has been shown and, if it finds that there is good cause, shall state on the record the facts proved that justify its finding. A statement of the finding and a statement of facts proved shall be entered in the minutes. If the moving party is unable to show good cause for the failure to give notice, the motion for continuance shall not be granted.

(e) Continuances shall be granted only upon a showing of good cause. Neither the convenience of the parties nor a stipulation of the parties is in and of itself good cause.

(f) At the conclusion of the motion for continuance, the court shall make a finding whether good cause has been shown and, if it finds that there is good cause, shall state on the record the facts proved that justify its finding. A statement of facts proved shall be entered in the minutes.

(g) When deciding whether or not good cause for a continuance has been shown, the court shall consider the general convenience and prior commitments of all witnesses, including peace officers. Both the general convenience and prior commitments of each witness also shall be considered in selecting a continuance date if the



motion is granted. The facts as to inconvenience or prior commitments may be offered by the witness or by a party to the case.

For purposes of this section, “good cause” includes, but is not limited to, those cases involving allegations that a violation of one or more of the sections specified in subdivision (a) of Section 11165.1 or Section 11165.6, or domestic violence as defined in Section 13700, has occurred and the prosecuting attorney assigned to the case has another trial, preliminary hearing, or motion to suppress in progress in that court or another court. A continuance under this paragraph shall be limited to a maximum of 10 additional court days.

(h) Upon a showing that the attorney of record at the time of the defendant’s first appearance in the superior court is a Member of the Legislature of this state and that the Legislature is in session or that a legislative interim committee of which the attorney is a duly appointed member is meeting or is to meet within the next seven days, the defendant shall be entitled to a reasonable continuance not to exceed 30 days.

(i) A continuance shall be granted only for that period of time shown to be necessary by the evidence considered at the hearing on the motion. Whenever any continuance is granted, the court shall state on the record the facts proved that justify the length of the continuance, and those facts shall be entered in the minutes.

(j) Whenever it shall appear that any court may be required, because of the condition of its calendar, to dismiss an action pursuant to Section 1382, the court must immediately notify the Chairman of the Judicial Council.

(k) This section shall not apply when the preliminary examination is set on a date less than 10 court days from the date of the defendant’s arraignment on the complaint, and the prosecution or the defendant moves to continue the preliminary examination to a date not more than 10 court days from the date of the defendant’s arraignment on the complaint.

